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REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR 1997: PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

Page

I. STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS 2

A. Decentralization 2
B. National capacity-building 2
C. Monitoring and evaluation 4
D. Training 5
E. Contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs 6
F. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations and civil society 8

II. ICPD + 5 10

III. RESOURCES 11

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I. STRENGTHENING PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

1. Strengthening programme effectiveness encompasses many components. It involves providing clear and pragmatic policy and programme guidance; decentralizing programme-approval and decision-making authority to the country level with adequate support from headquarters and the regional level; developing effective country programmes and subprogrammes; strengthening monitoring and evaluation of programmes; and matching staff training with the skills and competencies needed to meet organizational goals and priorities. Furthermore, it involves building national capacity to absorb financial assistance and to implement and monitor programme activities. In order to maximize UNFPA's own efforts to strengthen programme effectiveness, it is necessary to enhance coordination and collaboration with other development partners, including NGOs and groups in civil society.

A. Decentralization

2. UNFPA has made significant progress in decentralizing decision-making authority, along with providing the necessary programming tools and technical advisory services, to its country offices to strengthen the management and delivery of country programmes. This has been done in a phased manner. Management and organizational structures have been reconstituted to provide better technical guidance and policy direction to country offices; policies and procedures have been revised to improve programme formulation and implementation; and greater emphasis has been placed on developing the necessary monitoring and evaluation tools to ensure effective programme delivery and to measure impact and ensure accountability at all levels. Additionally, UNFPA is reviewing its financial procedures and mechanisms to ensure that management and monitoring requirements are met under full decentralization; it has also been upgrading its information networks to improve the exchange of information. The process has been supported by various training activities for headquarters, field and CST staff, with priority accorded to orientation on new guidelines and to training in the application of logical framework techniques and financial processes.

B. National capacity-building

3. UNFPA took an important step forward in 1997 in its efforts to help build national capacity in programme countries with the publication of new Programme Guidelines, which were issued in November as part of a revised Policies and Procedures Manual. The new Manual provides instructions and support to help headquarters and field staff translate the Fund's responsibilities under the ICPD Programme of Action into concrete actions. In listing its priority objectives, the new Programme Guidelines state at the outset that the detailed guidelines "underscore the importance of building national capacity in programme countries to enable them to achieve the goals and objectives recommended in the ICPD Programme of Action". With the publication and use of the new

guidelines, the programming process itself has been streamlined in a way that reflects the Fund's commitment to utilizing and building national capacity to design and manage population programmes.

4. The Fund has also incorporated an assessment of national requirements for capacity building into its main programming exercise, the Country Population Assessment (formerly the Programme Review and Strategy Development exercise). Such an assessment involves a concerted effort, in consultation with national counterparts and other development partners, to identify the key inputs required for national capacity-building and sustainable programme support. Whereas in the past the focus of UNFPA assistance had been on strengthening technical and institutional capacities, the Fund is now focusing more on developing the skills and competencies needed to formulate, manage, monitor and evaluate programmes. The Fund's Country Support Teams are essential in such efforts. They have been instrumental in mobilizing national expertise, where available, as well as transferring knowledge and skills to national counterparts and promoting self-reliance at the country level. Since one of the primary tasks of the CSTs is to help build national capacity in the countries they assist, the CSTs provide technical backstopping only if national expertise is not available.

5. During the course of 1997, UNFPA also supported two significant studies that will help the Fund's work in building national capacity in years to come. The first of these was a year-long evaluation that resulted in a report, "An Assessment of Execution Modalities for UNFPA-Support Programmes", published in November. The report is intended to provide guidance for the selection of executing agencies with a view to improving programme performance; its ultimate aim is to help the Fund increase the execution of UNFPA-assisted programmes by national institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, in programme countries. One of the major recommendations of the report was that this should be achieved in a flexible manner. For example, a Government could be the overall executing agency for an activity, but some functions, such as procurement or provision of international experts, could still be implemented by UNFPA or an international NGO.

6. A second important study was "Absorptive Capacity and Financial Resource Utilization in Population Programmes", which was conducted for the Fund by the Danish consulting firm COWI in response to an Executive Board decision asking for such a study with the aim of presenting concrete recommendations on how absorptive capacity could be increased, particularly in African countries. COWI conducted case studies in five programme countries -- Benin, Ghana, Mozambique, Zambia and Nepal -- and presented a list of 12 recommendations for UNFPA action. These recommendations serve as the basis for a report that UNFPA is submitting to the Executive Board at its annual session 1998 (document DP/FPA/1998/4).

C. Monitoring and evaluation

7. The year 1997 saw a remarkable intensification of evaluation activities at both country and intercountry levels. Resources allocated for evaluations tripled from 1996 to 1997. This was due principally to the fact that many programmes ended in 1996 and 1997 and component projects were evaluated as part of the review and assessment process prior to new programme development. (The Fund's evaluation activities are dealt with in more depth in document DP/FPA/1998/6, also being submitted to the Board at its annual session.)

8. Two thematic evaluations were initiated in 1997. The first is examining the strategies and modalities adopted by UNFPA to integrate HIV/AIDS concerns into reproductive health and other related projects and programmes at the country level. It is being conducted in full consultation with UNAIDS at both the headquarters and field levels. The second evaluation, based on a sample of eight projects, is assessing the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and, to the extent possible, impact of UNFPA-supported strategies to reduce maternal mortality within the context of Safe Motherhood programmes. In 1997, the conceptual and analytical frameworks for the two evaluations were completed and field work and field missions were begun. Both evaluations are expected to be concluded by mid-1998.

9. A major achievement in 1997 was the revision of the UNFPA monitoring and evaluation guidelines, which was carried out within the context of the preparation of the UNFPA Programme Manual. The guidelines highlight a more holistic approach to programming and emphasize the analysis of inputs rather than the process of delivering such inputs. In addition, to underscore the importance of continuous, systematic monitoring, the topics of monitoring and evaluation are accorded separate sections in the manual.

10. The major new feature in the monitoring guidelines is the annual subprogramme review. This ensures that all component projects in each subprogramme are reviewed together so that due attention is paid to fostering linkages and complementarity among them. The annual project report has been revised. It calls for a streamlined tabular presentation of the delivery of inputs and requests information not only on the general implementation of the project work plan but also specifically on national capacity-building, technical backstopping, execution modalities, gender concerns, and South-South cooperation. A mid-term review is held in each programme cycle to examine the status of implementation and its continued relevance to the national context.

11. An important new feature of the revised guidelines is that evaluations are required at the end of each programme period to ensure that there is a systematic assessment of programme performance and achievements, together with a synthesis of lessons learned for future application. The guidelines underscore the logical framework analysis as the cornerstone of the UNFPA monitoring and

evaluation system, since it provides the frame of reference for all subsequent monitoring and evaluation activities. The logframe matrix outlines the baseline data to be established and the nature and source of monitoring data to be generated in the programme implementation process.

12. During the year, UNFPA participated in inter-agency and United Nations exercises related to evaluation, including a Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) workshop that took place in early 1997. The Fund also provided inputs to the development of terms of reference for a United Nations system-wide evaluation exercise examining the impact of operational activities on national capacity-building. UNFPA also collaborated in a desk study conducted by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) on UNFPA support of national capacity-building in the area of reproductive health.

D. Training

13. The UNFPA staff training programme for 1997 was designed taking into consideration the recommendations of an independent evaluation, conducted in 1996, of the Fund's efforts in this area. This was accompanied by internal reviews of existing training curricula to match the upgrading of specific skills and competencies to meet organizational priorities, with priority being given to the training needs of field staff. As a result, the Fund developed a new training programme for newly recruited UNFPA Representatives, as well as a curriculum to build staff skills in applying the logical framework in the programming process and a training- of-trainers curriculum for cascade training on the logical framework. UNFPA saved on training costs by organizing a series of regional workshops on the logical framework for field staff and CST advisers and by providing training at the regional level on financial monitoring and management of country programmes.

14. During 1997, the Fund again participated in inter-agency training activities. Several UNFPA staff members attended workshops on field coordination, conducted by the United Nations Staff College in Turin, Italy. In addition, selected staff members served as facilitators for operationalizing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), helping with training exercises in field offices in pilot countries.

15. UNFPA conducted training workshops to introduce new programme guidelines and revised financial procedures, in line with increasing decentralization, and began work on developing other training methodologies such as computer-based training on finance management, including on the UNFPA Integrated Field Office System (UNIFOS), and distance-learning on management skills. The Fund also began an internal evaluation of the logical framework training that was conducted in 1997.

16. The computer and electronic infrastructure that has been established within UNFPA allows for faster information flows on training offerings at regional institutions, as well as on training aids and training packages and materials. The Fund has also reinforced the role of managers and supervisors in providing on-the-job training and coaching, within the context of the UNFPA Performance Appraisal Review (PAR) process. Managers and supervisors will thus be increasingly responsible for fostering a learning environment, providing constant mentoring and assessing the impact of training on job performance. To facilitate this process, a portion of the field training budget was decentralized to country offices in 1997, and UNFPA Representatives were given the authority to approve and authorize funds for training activities that could be conducted locally. The Representatives were also authorized to organize exchanges of staff among field offices to promote capacity-building.

17. To ensure a closer linkage between personnel and training functions, the Training Branch has been transferred to the newly established Office of Personnel and Training.

E. Contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs

18. The regular and predictable supply and availability of a range of safe, reliable and affordable contraceptives are keystones of effective reproductive health programmes. Accurate estimates of contraceptive requirements and an efficient logistics management system are necessary to facilitate the ready availability of contraceptive commodities. To strengthen national capacity to forecast contraceptive needs and manage contraceptive supply and distribution, UNFPA launched the Global Initiative on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs in Developing Countries. The first round of in-depth studies took place during 1992-1994. Additional studies have been undertaken in subsequent years. In 1997, in-depth studies on contraceptive requirements and logistics management needs were carried out in Ethiopia and Burkina Faso. Follow-up studies were also carried out in Bangladesh and Nepal, and technical support was provided to studies undertaken in Sudan and Tunisia.

19. The impact of the Global Initiative has been clearly visible in the attention that countries are now giving to contraceptive forecasting and logistics management. These key areas have been highlighted in several of the recently approved country programmes supported by the Fund.

20. To help build national capacity in logistics management, the Global Initiative organized four Logistics Management Training Strategy Workshops in 1997, in collaboration with the CSTs. The workshops were held in May, in Harare, with participants from Malawi, Namibia, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe; in July, in Dakar, with participants from Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea and Senegal; in November, in Bangkok, with participants from

Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Pakistan; and in December, in Amman, with participants from Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. A key aspect of the workshops was the development and drafting, by each participating two-person country team, of a strategy to build logistics-management capacity, to be taken back to the respective country for finalization and eventual implementation with coordinated inputs from the Government and donors. A workshop originally scheduled to take place in Santiago, Chile, in 1997 was rescheduled for 1998. Additional workshops are planned in 1998 to train participants from other countries in Africa and Eastern Europe.

21. The Global Initiative has benefited from close collaboration and cooperation with developing and donor countries, the World Bank, and international NGOs such as The Rockefeller Foundation, The Population Council, IPPF and the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH).

22. Recognizing the key importance of donor coordination in facilitating the timely and appropriate supply of reproductive health commodities, including contraceptives for STD/AIDS prevention, the Global Initiative maintains a database on donor-supplied contraceptive commodities. The database has recently been expanded to include data on donor support for logistics management capacity-building in recipient countries. Both commodities and logistics support data and information are reported annually by the Global Initiative in the UNFPA publication *Donor Support for Contraceptive Commodities*.

23. In an effort to strengthen the contribution of the private sector in the delivery of quality contraceptive commodities, as called for in chapter 15 of the ICPD Programme of Action, the Global Initiative, under the guidance of its Working Group, organized a consultative meeting of oral contraceptive manufacturers, government representatives and members of the development community to explore the role of the private sector in providing affordable, commercially priced contraceptives and reproductive health commodities in developing countries. The meeting, which took place in July in New York, concluded, *inter alia*, that the private sector should play an expanded role in this area, and that much could be accomplished by means of negotiated agreements among the three interested parties: developing country governments, donors, and manufacturers. Concluding that UNFPA could play an important role in facilitating such agreements, the meeting recommended that the Fund organize market-segmentation studies in selected countries. It was further agreed that, with the support of The Rockefeller Foundation, a follow-up meeting would be organized in September 1998 in Bellagio, Italy. In the meantime, the Global Initiative is working with the principal players in identifying likely candidate countries where collaborative activities may be undertaken.

24. The Global Contraceptive Commodity Programme (GCCP), established in response to decision 96/3 of the Executive Board, became operational in 1997. The immediate objective of the

GCCP is to provide essential buffer stocks of contraceptives to facilitate prompt response to urgent and emergency requests for contraceptives from developing countries. The need to arrange contraceptive stock holdings resulted from the often lengthy lead times for commonly requested contraceptive products for the international public sector. The ready availability of stocks is necessary to avert potential disruptions of national reproductive health programmes. The long-term objective of the GCCP is to contribute, in close cooperation with the Global Initiative, to the overall strengthening of reproductive health programmes by improving mechanisms and modalities for addressing unmet needs for contraceptives; increasing contraceptive choice; and ensuring quality in meeting the contraceptive needs of men and women, through such inputs as technical training and technical advisory services, and by improving management information systems, warehousing, stock-keeping and transportation.

25. The initial contribution of UNFPA to the GCCP in the amount of $5 million was supplemented in 1997 through a contribution from the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, in the amount of £1 million. The GCCP, which is managed as a trust fund, operates as a revolving fund from which UNFPA projects are able to purchase inventories of required contraceptives in order to meet the emergency or urgent needs of developing countries. It responded during 1997 to emergency or urgent requests for contraceptives from Albania, Armenia, Bolivia, Bulgaria, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Georgia, Jordan, Moldova, Myanmar, Oman, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, the Turks and Caicos Islands, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Zambia. The contraceptive commodities provided by the GCCP during 1997 included condoms, oral contraceptives, intra-uterine devices (IUDs), vaginal foaming tablets and injectables. Guidelines, policies and procedures governing the operation of the GCCP revolving fund were widely disseminated in February 1998 to all UNFPA staff at headquarters and in the field.

F. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations and civil society

26. A key element in strengthening programme implementation and delivery is making effective use of NGOs and other groups in civil society. Recognizing that NGOs have extensive outreach, associations and networks, particularly at the grass-roots level, the Fund continued to expand and enhance its partnerships with NGOs in 1997.

27. For example, in January, UNFPA and the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) organized the African Youth Forum at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Attended by approximately 500 participants, including about 200 young people under the age of 25, the Forum drew up a comprehensive set of recommendations that are also relevant to other regions of the world and have wide applicability for programme design and implementation. In June, UNFPA and the Government of Denmark, with the cooperation of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, organized a landmark meeting on youth and reproductive health

in countries in transition, bringing together representatives of NGOs and relevant government departments from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic States.

28. One indication of the Fund's wide-ranging collaboration with NGOs is the fact that NGOs are implementing UNFPA-supported HIV/AIDS-prevention programmes in some 80 countries. The depth of such collaboration is also increasing, as is reflected in UNFPA country programmes as well as in the many examples cited in parts I and II of this report.

29. In Mongolia, as a means of increasing outreach, the Government now promotes cooperation with NGOs, particularly in reproductive health advocacy and IEC activities. A novel feature of the second cycle of UNFPA assistance to the country is the use of international NGOs to execute reproductive health projects. In the Russian Federation, UNFPA is supporting a programme to strengthen the capacity of a Russian NGO, the Women's Innovative Fund East-West (ZHIF), to promote women's human, political, economic and reproductive rights, as well as to develop a network to promote these rights. Similarly, in Egypt, strengthening NGO capabilities is an important component of the Fund's programme of assistance.

30. In Turkey, UNFPA is supporting an NGO-led advocacy campaign on reproductive health targeting parliamentarians. Under the new partnerships created between the Government and NGOs, a network of five NGOs has begun providing community-based reproductive health services to complement services provided by government clinics. In Jordan, under the Fund's fourth cycle of assistance, national NGOs were successfully mobilized to raise awareness and inform and educate the public about population issues and their impact on the quality of life. The focus was on reproductive health, including family planning and sexual health, and gender issues. These activities targeted women, men and youth. The intensive IEC efforts of the NGOs have had a significant impact on carving out a key role and niche for these NGOs in supporting the national reproductive health programme.

31. In Malawi, UNFPA intensified its efforts in 1997 to involve NGOs, the media and members of civil society in the implementation of population activities both in the context of the country programme and during such events as the celebrations of World Population Day, World AIDS Day, and the release of UNFPA's State of World Population report. The National Association of Business Women and Banja La Mtsogolo, two key local NGOs, are implementing projects under the Fund's new programme of assistance. In Guatemala, under the UNFPA-supported project on population education, NGOs and civil society groups have been actively involved in the policy process to design and approve curricula for elementary and high schools. Also, reproductive health services are being provided by women's NGOs, under a UNFPA-supported project.

II. ICPD+5

32. Following Executive Board decision 97/14, UNFPA initiated preparatory activities for the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, within the mandate of the Fund. Also, in accordance with decision 97/14, the proposal for an overall review and appraisal was submitted by the President of the Executive Board to the fifty-second session of the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, for the consideration of the General Assembly and subsequent decision on the process and modalities.

33. At the fifty-second session, by resolution 52/188, the General Assembly decided to, *inter alia*, convene a Special Session of the General Assembly from 30 June to 2 July 1999 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and to constitute the thirty-second session of the Commission on Population and Development as the preparatory committee for the Special Session. It was further decided that the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General should also contain an overall assessment of the progress achieved and constraints faced in the implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as recommendations for the future, and that at the fifty-third session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General would submit a progress report on the preparations for the Special Session.

34. UNFPA will organize a series of roundtables and technical meetings between April and November 1998. These informal meetings will review programme experience at national and international levels. Participants will include selected programme implementors, including NGOs, and national and international experts. All United Nations Regional Commissions are planning to review progress achieved in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and, to this end, ministerial and technical meetings have been scheduled for each region. An International Forum, to be attended by more than 120 countries, is planned in February 1999, in the Netherlands, with participation from governments, civil society, including NGOs, and other international organizations working in population and development. Support from private foundations, bilateral donors and national governments is being sought to facilitate these activities, including the International Forum.

35. Inclusive and active participation by all entities of the United Nations system is encouraged in all of the preparatory activities leading to the General Assembly Special Session on ICPD+5. To that end, UNFPA has held consultations with the Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Information is being shared formally within the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) and more informally through regular inter-agency briefings convened by UNFPA. Similarly, information has also been shared with NGOs through briefings and other communications. Regular updates of information on the preparations for events associated with ICPD+5 can be found on the Internet at the Fund's website (<www.unfpa.org/icpd>).

36. Documentation for the International Forum will be provided by the quinquennial review, as well as through a synthesis of the findings and results of the roundtables, technical meetings and regional meetings, with an emphasis on analysis of operational experience in implementing the Programme of Action at the country level. The four roundtables planned in 1998 are: (a) adolescent sexual and reproductive health (April, New York); (b) reproductive rights and implementation of reproductive health programmes, including women's empowerment, male involvement and human rights (Kampala, Uganda, June); (c) partnership with civil society in implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (Dhaka, Bangladesh, July); and (d) population and macro-economic linkages (Bellagio, Italy, November). The three technical meetings planned in 1998 are: (a) a technical symposium on international migration and development (The Hague, Netherlands, 29 June-3 July); (b) a technical meeting on reproductive health services in crisis situations (September, venue to be confirmed); and (c) a technical meeting on population ageing (October, venue to be confirmed).

III. RESOURCES

37. Income in 1997 (provisional) totalled $319.9 million: $290.1 million for general resources and $29.8 million for multi-bilateral co-financing activities. This represented a 6 per cent decrease in general resources from the previous year and a 63 per cent increase in resources to multi-bilateral co-financing activities. Approximately 95 per cent of these resources were contributed by Japan, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Finland, Switzerland and Canada.

38. In 1997, a large number of major donors increased their contributions in terms of their national currencies, but unfavourable exchange rates resulted in a decrease in terms of the United States dollar. The resulting loss amounted to $13 million, which in turn translated into an overall decrease in total income by $7.1 million compared to the 1996 total income level of $326.9 million.

39. However, it is important to note that UNFPA's income over the last five years has increased by 32 per cent for general resources and by 75 per cent for multi-bilateral co-financing arrangements. The overall positive trend has been in direct response to the ICPD Programme of Action.

40. The general outlook for UNFPA's income in 1998 is positive. Even though some major donors did not increase their financial support for population, the following factors are expected to give impetus to resource mobilization efforts: (a) the focus of the world community in meeting the challenges of the ICPD Programme of Action remains strong; and (b) the fact that the Fund is well positioned to execute an expanded programme of assistance in response to the increasing demands from developing countries for population assistance.

41. Moreover, the response of the private sector for supporting population activities is very encouraging. In particular, there are expectations of support from UNITRUST, a foundation established by Mr. Ted Turner for the benefit of United Nations development efforts, including population. The strong leadership of the Executive Board in the area of resource mobilization is also very promising. It is hoped that the Board will soon make recommendations on the ways and means for establishing a reliable funding mechanism for providing a predictable, adequate and secure resource base for UNFPA. This is absolutely necessary in achieving the far-reaching goals agreed to in the ICPD Programme of Action.

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